

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 535

By Turner

A RESOLUTION to create a sentence reduction task force to study sentencing imposed for non-violent felony drug offenses.

WHEREAS, Tennessee's jails and prisons are filled with many inmates who have committed non-violent drug offenses involving the mere possession or purchase of small quantities of controlled substances; and

WHEREAS, many of these inmates generally pose little danger to the public but are incarcerated at great financial expense to the state; and

WHEREAS, the governor and the legislature of Tennessee should, for these and many other reasons, consider sentence reduction and sentencing alternatives for non-violent drug offenses; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that a task force is established to study possible reductions in mandatory sentencing and the implementation of sentencing alternatives for non-violent drug offenders.

The task force shall be appointed as follows:

(1) The following members to be appointed by the speaker of the senate:

(A) Five (5) members of the public, who have experience or interest in the criminal justice system, including, but not limited to, attorneys, probation officers, judges, and victims; and

(B) Two (2) members of the senate;

(2) The following members to be appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives:

(A) Five (5) members of the public, who have experience or interest in the criminal justice system, including, but not limited to, attorneys, probation officers, judges, and victims; and

(B) Two (2) members of the house of representatives; and

(3) The following members who shall serve as ex officio members:

(A) The attorney general and reporter, or the attorney general and reporter's designee;

(B) The commissioner of finance and administration, or the commissioner's designee;

(C) The commissioner of mental health and substance abuse services, or the commissioner's designee;

(D) The commissioner of correction, or the commissioner's designee;

(E) The administrative director of the administrative office of the courts, or the director's designee; and

(F) The executive director of the board of parole, or the director's designee.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the longest serving legislative member of the task force shall call the first meeting of the task force, at which time the task force shall elect a chair. All members of the task force shall serve as such without compensation, but they shall be allotted necessary travel and other appropriate expenses while engaged in the work of or for the task force. The task force shall be administratively attached to the administrative office of the courts.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that on or before January 1, 2017, the task force shall submit a report of its findings and recommendations to the governor, the speakers of the senate and the house of representatives, and the members of the judiciary committee of the senate and the criminal justice committee of the house of representatives. Upon providing such report and recommendation, the task force shall cease to exist.